

# Grandfathers Among This School's Pupils

The Oldest of Them at 67 Has Just Learned to Write—Boys and Girls Study There, Too—Everything Taught, From the Three "R's" to Millinery and Cooking—No Other School Like It Anywhere



THE ABC CLASS. THE PUPIL IN THE SECOND SEAT IS A GRANDFATHER.



MILLINERY CLASS.



COOKING CLASS. MANY OF THE MEN WANT TO BE CHEFS OR DINING CAR.

Over in the black belt, as it is called, where there is more demand for manual training than mental training in the struggle for existence, the city has had a school for the past year which educators have been watching with a great deal of interest. As public schools go, this is an experiment never made before so far as is known.

One of the features of this school is its requirements. The chief one of these is that a pupil must know too much. Age is no bar to admission. In this it differs from probably every other public school.

As a result, this school has a primary class that boasts of a pupil 67 years old, and other pupils have passed 50. If an octogenarian turned up there and said he wanted to learn something included in the curriculum, he would be welcomed like a boy or girl of 15, and there wouldn't be a great deal of surprise at him. They have got over being surprised in this school.

The school closed its term recently with exercises in which young and old joined with the same enthusiasm; and when the exercises were over and the pupils were told to wait and come back next year, there was as sad a lot of young people and old people as could be found.

It wasn't the usual crowd of romping boys and girls, throwing up their hats at the thought that school was over. These pupils were genuinely sorry.

For the past school year this school has been located in Public School 80 in West Forty-first street. When it starts again next year it may be in some other school, for the experiment was successful to the extent that it had more pupils than could be comfortably accommodated and next fall more are expected.

It would be hard to find another school like this one. It is an evening industrial school, and elementary school combined. Everything is elective.

If you prefer to know how to bake a cake scientifically to being able to read every-

thing in the second reader, the city in this school stands ready to teach you how to bake and won't mention the second reader. If you would rather learn how to make dresses or gorgeous hats than to do sums in arithmetic the city will teach you all you want to know and let arithmetic go.

On the other hand you may be 60 or 70 years old and decide that you would like to learn to read and write. There wouldn't be the least bit of a kick made in this school at admitting you into the first primary class. Instead, you'd be patted on the back by the principal and told to go ahead with such a laudable ambition. It isn't probable that there would be any fun made of you in the class room, either.

There are lots of night schools in New York. In fact, the importance of the night

school is coming to be more and more recognized and more are started every year; but none of these combines the teaching of the elementary branches and the teaching of the trades.

You must have completed your elementary education before you can learn any of the trades in the ordinary schools. Therefore, the school in West Forty-first street is unique in the city's school system.

Public School 80 is almost in the center of the black belt. There is more illiteracy there, perhaps, than anywhere else. There is also a lack of technical knowledge of all kinds.

It didn't seem quite right to the school people that the thousands in this section should be deprived of the technical education the city was giving for nothing to those

fortunate enough to have learned the elementary branches, so they decided to see how the experiment would work of starting an industrial and elementary school with no requirements.

"It is all right to plan such a school," said one of the educators when told about this idea, "but over there in that section the question is, Will any one come to the school?"

They weren't long in getting an answer to this question.

There isn't any truant law to make grown folks go to school, no matter how little they know. Going to such a school is voluntary, the result of ambition pure and simple.

The question was whether there would be sufficient ambition in the crowded tenements where the poorer colored people

live to make the school a success. There wasn't any doubt of this in a few weeks. The school started with 200 pupils of all ages and wound up the term with 2,000. Next year it is expected the number will swell to more than 3,000.

Even those who wanted to see the experiment made were hardly prepared for some of the things that happened. One night soon after the school was started a white haired colored man came alone and put his name on the rolls. He said he was 67. He asked him what was that class he wanted to join.

"I want to write my name," said the old man. "I'm kind of late, but I'd just like to see how it looks."

George Braxton—that was his name—straightaway became a member of the first primary class. He has been going every night.

When the closing exercises were held recently he was kept busy writing his name and a lot of other words for a circle of admiring friends. He was the oldest pupil in that or any other class, but there were many who had passed 40. Some of these were colored women who went out scrubbing all day or bent over the ironing board until 6 o'clock. They were there learning to read and write, too.

There were carpenters, janitors and waiters, men who worked hard all day. They sat side by side with colored boys and girls in their teens.

Hundreds came, however, not to learn to read or write but to learn how to make livelivelihood. They weren't asked how much they knew. They were just told to enter whatever class they wanted to.

Dressmaking was the most popular. The school started with one dressmaking class and finished with six. On the night the school closed choruses of exclamations came from these classrooms. The colored population of the district had turned out to inspect what had been accomplished and gasped at what they saw. There were creations in blue, in red, in lavender, dresses with lace and without lace, princess gowns and gowns for the ballroom. And the creators stood around giggling at the exclamations of their friends. Some of the pupils were middle aged women, who did washing in the daytime, but their joy was the joy of children.

Next to dressmaking came the millinery classes in point of popularity. There were five of these. There were classes for beginners and advanced classes. The crowds of colored visitors that surged through these rooms saw hats of every kind and shade.

Sixth avenue has nothing to equal some of them, and Sixth avenue has been ablaze with them ever since the school closed. The pupils were allowed to take them home for their own adornment or to sell them if they wished. The city furnished all the materials and taught the pupils how to make the hat from the frame to the last piece of ribbon on it.

If the joy of those who had turned out these confections so dear to the race that loves color in its gaudier forms was great, it was nothing to that of the pupils in the cooking school. City Superintendent Maxwell happened to visit the cooking class of the new school soon after it was started. To his surprise he found a lot of able bodied

men learning to make cakes and pies. Dr. Maxwell hadn't found this in any of the industrial high schools.

"What in the world are you doing here?" he asked one of the male pupils, a big black fellow, who is a waiter in the daytime.

"Learnin' to be a chef, sah," said the pupil proudly.

On the night of the commencement the men were arrayed in spotless white and with white caps on their heads. They were proudly exhibiting to male friends who had dropped in cakes with colored frosting arranged on tables and pointing to pies that made the mouth water.

Most of the pupils want to work on the dining cars and the city is helping them to get there.

Right next door to the cooking class and its kitchen, so close that its savory odors could be detected, was the class in carpentry. Its teacher was a colored man and about three-fourths of its pupils this year were colored. There are at present classes in mechanical drawing, embroidery, stenography and typewriting. Next year they are going to add some more.

The principal of this school is William H. Bulkeley. He is a colored man and has been connected with the school system a long time. Some of his teachers are white and some are colored. At the school exercises they sat with their pupils of all ages and of both races and were as proud of them as any teachers could be.

But the proudest of all was probably the old negro, the school's oldest pupil, who had learned to write his name in his sixty seventh year.

## COURTHER ON THE TRAPEZE

"YES," MILLY SAID TO BILLY AFTER THE PLUNGE.

Without Altercation T. Hamilton Tells Why the Circus Has Become the Great Conservator of Family Life in America—Romances of the Ring and the Midair.

"Are there any romances among the circus performers?"

"Millions of them," said Tody Hamilton, dropping into a flying act from force of habit. "Reveries and romances, romances that are remembered, retransforming and reverberating, romances that are—"

"Hold on, there!" interrupted the caller. "This isn't for next year's programme of 'The Greatest Show on Earth,' nor even an advance notice for the town you'll hit after leaving the Garden. I just happened to ask if you had any romances among your people; mere idle curiosity prompted the question, not a desire to hear everything there is in the dictionary under R. Suppose I had asked if you had any love affairs. How'd you put it then?"

"Love? Lots—lucid, languid, languorous love, listlessly luring lads and lassies." "That's worse than R. Now, Col. Hamilton, quit it. Forget that you are a press agent, the dean of press agents, and tell just a plain, unvarnished tale, not for publication. Are there any romances among the circus folk?"

"You promise faithfully that this won't be printed, that I may talk to you frankly without adjectives?"

"Absolutely."

"Heavens, what a relief! It seems too good to be true. But remember, not a word for the public prints. You are not to betray my confidences and expose my naked language to the public, divested of all those warm, woolen, winterweight words which are wont to wrap it within their warp and woof."

The press "bureau" stenographer took that last down automatically and stuck it into the W pigeon hole for future use; but it was evident that Tody Hamilton had not intended to say anything of the sort, that he did not realize that he had said it.

"Of course there are romances. When two young people, a man and a woman, are in daily association performing prodigies of valor and sharing the common peril of—remember you have promised not to print the skeleton talk—sharing the common danger of perilous performances denoting the acme of nerve allied with the perfection of intelligent and careful training; when, I say, two such people are in daily association there is bound to be engendered in their breasts a feeling of warm regard, I may say, a sense of love for each other, lasting lifelong love, leading—"

"Whistle for brakes. You got started very well that time, although it was in a pretty high key."

"Now here's the reverse of that. There are never any scandals in the circus. Did you ever hear of a clown suing or being sued for a divorce? Never."

"Or of a trapeze artist asking the courts for a separation or for the custody of the children? You never did. The circus has become the great conservator of domestic life in America."

"The performers are all in family groups. If a woman has a man to assist her in an absorbing sensational death defying feat, that man is her husband, brother or father, sometimes a son."

"Look at that woman on the trapeze 'way up there just under the roof. Now, look at that clown watching her. He is her husband."

The woman, in pink tights and spangles, was resting after a flying act in which she had swung thirty feet or more through the air to be caught by her own brother, hanging by his legs to another trapeze, had swung out to meet her.

He had twisted her around in the air and sent her flying back to her perch. As she sat there she did something unconsciously to her back hair, grabbing the comb with the thumb and first three fingers and working it up and down, letting the little finger wave in the air.

Every woman does that same thing in exactly that same way, no matter whether she is sitting in a rocking chair darning socks or sitting astride a trapeze in pink tights. Seeing her do it was corroborative evidence of Tody Hamilton's assertion that the performers are all domestic and that the circus is the great conservator of family life.

That flight through the air to see brother and back again was nothing compared to the giant swing by the heels that she was about to make. It was for that that the clown husband was watching, just as he had watched at every performance for many seasons.

That's one advantage of being a clown; you can stop short at whatever you're doing and stare at the roof, and the audience thinks it's part of your act, that you are merely about ready to appear to be surprised when the slap stick comes down hard from behind. On the day of the private lecture on marital felicity by T. Hamilton the clown husband happened to be beating a two man power donkey with a roll of rubber bologna when the time came for the giant swing. He knew that it was time, because the band stopped playing suddenly, as it always does when somebody aloft is about to do a stunt that is particularly risky and sensational.

The husband quit his fooling and looked up his wife, the two men on the donkey knew what he was doing and stood still to give him a chance, and the clown on top of the donkey knew, too, and came to a position.

After the quarter minute of silence there was a ruffle of the drums, and Mrs. Clown let herself go head first from the highest horizontal bar in the aerial rigging, she was caught by the heels, swung down and up on the other side, as rigid as a bar of steel, plunged again, with all the trumpets blaring this time, and came under and up with so much gathered momentum that the slightest stop at the finish of the revolution, the catching on the centre so to speak, was hardly perceptible.

That happened five times, with the band

playing like mad, with the donkey standing stock still, the clown on top still posing and grinning and the other clown watching the whirling of the pink legs. When his wife caught the geyser rope and swung the giant swing to an end the clown lambasted the donkey with the bologna and the group cavorted around the arena busqueing the music ride of the high school horses.

"Did you notice how anxious that clown looked?" asked Tody Hamilton. "He's afraid his wife will fall into the net some day and the net is no sure safeguard against a broken neck."

The clown down on the sawdust and the pink enchantress of the upper air furnish what Tody Hamilton calls a romance that's already made and established. The big circus has them in the making, too. Courtship goes on on horseback, in the Roman chariot on the slack wire, and in the ground and lofty tumbling.

"Nice, respectable courtships with chaplains," explained Tody. "It is this way. Father and mother with son and daughter form the nucleus of a troupe, a trapeze party for instance. There may be not enough of them for a big circus, so they take in a relative if there is one handy, or a young pair of lovers, and in the end a stranger, who becomes one of the family, so far as training, rehearsing and performing are concerned."

The chances are that he marries the daughter after they have been in the troupe for several seasons. It is an aerial courtship. Isn't it just natural to suppose that a young pair of lovers will be more of each other when one or both are risking their necks?

"If they are normal they do, and there is nobody more normal or natural than a circus performer. Now in the course of time the heads of the troupe get a little stiff with age and have to cut out the most difficult and make show two or three times a week. They drop down to the lower trapeze near the net and let the youngsters go aloft for the giant swings and long flights."

"Now after that preliminary I'll tell you a true story of an aerial romance. Remember, not a word of this for publication."

The girl in this story was Milly on the posters, but up in the air she was just Milly. I've forgotten how we played up the boy on the programme, but he was Bill among his friends.

"Bill and Milly had been promoted by the girl's father, who was head man in the troupe, to what you might call the death cheating part of the family's performance—the long swinging simultaneous somersaults on two trapezes, somersaults side by side in midair, then catching two more trapezes, flying free and swinging on each on a perch on the other side."

They had done it all right in rehearsal, but rehearsals are nothing to regular performances so far as the nerves are concerned. But this story has to do with their first cheating of death before the public. They were on the first perch.

"Milly," said Billy, "your folks are getting old. The old man seemed pretty stiff getting up into the rigging to-night. Can't we take their places? You know what I mean, Milly. You and I ought to go through life on the same trapeze and have some little acrobats of our own. We may break our necks in a minute, so what do you say?"

"Just then, before the girl could open her mouth, the band stopped playing and that dreadful instant of dead silence was their cue, and they plunged together, turned in the air as evenly as two wheels on the same axle and landed with the band playing and the crowd roaring, on the opposite perch."

"Yes, Milly," said Billy.

## CHINESE DIPLOMAT'S JOKE.

TOOK HIM THREE WEEKS, BUT HE HAD HIS FUN.

Amused the Folks From the Other Legations at the Roller Rink Just Once—Then He Set to Work to Learn the Game—Made Them Open Their Eyes.

WASHINGTON, April 21.—Persons who believe that Chinamen have no sense of fun are invited to pay attention to this story.

Washington has had the roller skating bug for the past three or four months. It is a revival of the roller skating craze of a couple of decades ago. Convention Hall, which has been turned into a roller rink, has one of the biggest floor spaces in the United States, and the floor is packed with skaters of all degrees at each of the three daily skating sessions. Many of the skaters are in town, men and women, and some of them middle aged persons not a stranger, who becomes one of the family, so far as training, rehearsing and performing are concerned.

The chances are that he marries the daughter after they have been in the troupe for several seasons. It is an aerial courtship. Isn't it just natural to suppose that a young pair of lovers will be more of each other when one or both are risking their necks?

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Chinaman's face. If Chinamen ever are hard losers they rarely or never show it. The legation people had a great lot of fun over the clumsy Chinese secretary's thumping falls. They pretended to sympathize with him keenly, but their winks and grins showed that they weren't looking at him with much enjoyment they were having. When he had the skates taken off the Chinese Secretary of Embassy resumed his bench seat and benevolently watched the rest of them skate for the remainder of the morning session.

The Chinese secretary appeared at the rink at 9 o'clock on the following morning, sought the proprietor of the rink, introduced himself and announced that he was going to learn how to roller skate. He wanted to learn while there was nobody else on the floor, he said, and was willing to pay for private instruction during the off hours. He arranged for private instruction in the art of roller skating from 8 to 10 in the morning, 12 to 2 in the afternoon, and 5 to 7 in the evening, at which periods the rink is closed to the public. The proprietor of the rink detailed one of the instructors to attend the Chinese secretary during these hours.

When the Chinaman turned up at the rink on the following morning he wore an American sack suit instead of his Chinese official robes. He had regular skating shoes on his feet, and he had a pair of brand new roller skates, the finest purchasable for money, slung over his arm. The whole immense rink floor space belonged to the Chinaman and his instructor, and they went at it. The Chinaman practiced roller skating for six hours that day, six hours the next day, six the day after that, and every day for three weeks. He was as prompt as the town clock, and there wasn't a minute of the entire time that his smile didn't look to be irradicable.

On Wednesday morning last the Chinese secretary invited his chief, the Chinese Ambassador, and all of the members of the Chinese official suite, to accompany him to the roller rink for the morning session. Whether the secretary let his chief and the others of the legation staff in on what was going to come off doesn't appear; but the Ambassador from the Flowery Kingdom and every member of his entourage down to the lowliest copyist of official documents went with the secretary to the rink.

An unusually large "diplomatic bunch," including a couple of Ambassadors, there to look on, had already assembled at the rink when the Chinese party arrived. All hands gave the Chinaman a great reception, and a crowd of the young attachés of other legations got around the Chinese secretary and pleaded with him to put the skates on once more and try the thing again. The secretary demurred quite a little, but finally he yielded again, this time with more apparent reluctance than when he had put the skates on the first time. He retired to his instructor's cubbyhole of a room, put on his skating shoes and his fine pair of roller skates and then appeared at the gate to the floor, leaning heavily on the arm of his instructor, his knees seeming to shake beneath his flowing robe.

A titter of acute enjoyment went up from the crowd of legation people on the floor when they saw the Chinaman with the skates on again. They huddled at one end of the rink to give the Chinaman all the room he'd need. They had no intention of allowing him to knock them down in sprawling around as usual, anyhow, they wanted to get together so as to enjoy the fun more.

The instructor gave the man running the orchestra a signal and the band, chestion struck into a swinging waltz tune.

Then the Chinese secretary and the instructor, holding each other by the hands and feet, started to skate. The Chinese secretary, shot into the middle of the floor and began to execute an extremely graceful roller skating waltz. The jaws of the watching crowd were open. They had never seen a Chinaman so graceful. The Chinaman and his instructor waltzed gaily about the immense floor space for a few minutes, reversing at times and starting to skate in various directions. The Chinese secretary, exchanging stunts of the roller waltz, when, with a mighty shove, the instructor pushed the calm looking secretary into the middle of the floor. The legation people huddled together to watch the fun that didn't evade, were amazed to note that the Chinaman was spinning all that long distance to do the more simple roller skating. He was spinning around the Chinese secretary, while he held the other foot up under the shelter of his robe.

Reaching the middle of the floor, the Chinaman brought the other foot to the ground and started to skate. He was shot into the middle of the floor and began to execute an extremely graceful roller skating waltz. The jaws of the watching crowd were open. They had never seen a Chinaman so graceful. The Chinaman and his instructor waltzed gaily about the immense floor space for a few minutes, reversing at times and starting to skate in various directions. The Chinese secretary, exchanging stunts of the roller waltz, when, with a mighty shove, the instructor pushed the calm looking secretary into the middle of the floor. The legation people huddled together to watch the fun that didn't evade, were amazed to note that the Chinaman was spinning all that long distance to do the more simple roller skating. He was spinning around the Chinese secretary, while he held the other foot up under the shelter of his robe.

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The Chinese Ambassador, sitting on a high tier bench, looked smiling and happy, while the members of his official suite glanced at one another, and made low toned, gurgling remarks.

The legation people huddled at the far end of the rink and looked chafffallen, but when their first amazement was over they showed that they were fair by surrounding the Chinese secretary and overwhelming him with congratulations.

"The joke is on us," they all told him, rather superciliously.

For the remainder of the morning session the Chinese secretary skated around the great rink arena with the prettiest girls of the legation crowd and taught them how to do the more simple roller skating. The Chinese secretary hadn't said a word to any of the legation people as to how his "reversal of form" came about, and most of them believe that he fooled them, the first time by pretending not to know how to skate, professing to hold it impossible for anybody to achieve, the Chinaman's roller skating proficiency in the space of a month. They don't know anything about the Chinaman's six hours of determined practice a day for a month, and they say that he must have learned roller skating in San Francisco, where he was stationed before coming here; but the facts are as here given.

## A DOUBTFUL QUARTER.

Taken by a Man Not Yet Wholly Hardened—What He Did With It.

"I took the other day," said a man whose conscience is not yet seared, "a silver quarter that on inspection proved somewhat doubtful. At one point on its edge there was a little raised place that looked like a burr that had been smoothed over, and on one face there was a little puffed up place."

"To test it I simply handed it out the first time I had occasion to use money, this being at a ticket office in the subway."

"The ticket seller didn't simply wish my quarter over to one side with one movement and wish me out my ticket and change with another. On the contrary he glanced at my quarter as it lay there on the glass before him for an instant, and then he turned the coin over and glanced at its other side and then—he wished it back to me; all without a word."

"Of course I didn't say anything; there wasn't anything to be said. The first man I had tried it on, and he a man who ought to know, considered the quarter bad."

"Yet I was not entirely convinced. The ticket seller was young and youth is rash in its judgment."

"At the same time the ticket seller's decision did shake me a little. If the quarter was bad I could afford to pass it, for it might finally pass into the hands of somebody who could less afford to lose it than I could. So it was up to me to find out definitely about the coin in various amounts larger than the one I was bringing in, but I went up to the receiving teller's window for the same, with full confidence that Uncle Sam treats all his customers alike, and plunked down my marred quarter."

"Is it good—or bad?" I asked; and—

"Good," said the receiving teller, as he picked it up; and then he disappeared to return in a moment, and hand me a quarter which I then supposed to be the one I had handed him."

"What was the matter with it?" I asked him, and—

"It had been mounted as a pin," he said, "or in some way handled by a jeweler. I have given you another in place of it."

"And so he had, as I now discovered, for in place of the marred coin he had given me a perfect one; and with the marred coin thus withdrawn for recoinage, and with one that would pass, in place of it, I regarded the incident as closed."

Our Progress.

From the Washington Star.

"Whither are we drifting?" asked the platitudeous orator.

"We ain't drifting anywhere," said the man in the back row who tears the corporations.

"We're being pushed."